



HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

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National Arson Awareness Week, May 7 - 13

HFD Juvenile FireStopper Program celebrates 10 years

This is Houston's seventh Arson Awareness Week and this year we are celebrating successes of the Houston Fire Department in combating this community problem.

This is the 10th year the fire department has provided intervention education to youth who have set fires and this program has maintained a 98 percent success rate in ceasing the firesetting behavior. Although the number of fires set by youth has declined, these fires set by small hands cost Houston approximately \$4.5 million in property loss and a few lives.

Yoshi, the Houston Arson and Fire Investigation Division's first investigative canine, has worked on over 200 cases before starting her 5th year of service, and of those cases 66% have been cleared. Yoshi brags a 90 percent accuracy rate in alerting to sites where accelerants like gasoline have been used to start the fire. Realizing the value of an arson dog, the Houston Fire Department is adding a second canine to its force.

Arson has many faces whether it is out of spite, insurance fraud or the curiosity of a child. Yet, there is always a loss whether of property, life or freedom.

The City of Houston encourages area businesses, communities, schools, fire departments and individuals to work together to create and implement preventive measures to address the increasingly costly and devastating problem of arson.